

COUNTRY Norway, Sweden, USSR

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SUBJECT Influence of Russia on Scandinavian Countries

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letter of 16 October 1978 from the  
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1. It is admitted that the North European countries must adapt themselves to the situation created by the fact that Russia has become the strongest power in Europe as a result of the late war.
2. One result has been the change that has taken place in the meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs of the northern countries. The Finnish representatives no longer attend. The meetings are now limited to the exchange of general opinions and are no longer followed by political and economic agreements. Moscow is extremely suspicious and has made it clear that no political agreements between the Scandinavian countries will be tolerated.
3. Relations are extremely circumspect between Norway and Russia. The Moscow Government has sounded out Oslo in regard to leasing of Spitsbergen and concerning the coal mines belonging to Norway, as well as about leasing a port in Finnmark. The Norwegian Government replied that it would agree to lease the section of Spitsbergen belonging to Norway and to the exploitation of coal mines on this island. However, Norway is not willing to surrender a port in the Arctic or on the Atlantic to the USSR. Because of a special agreement with Sweden, Norway is obliged to keep Narvik open for the exportation of Swedish ore from Kiruna.
4. Relations between Sweden and Russia are more complicated. There have been arguments regarding the Swedish tradition of granting the right of free asylum. Swedish economic leaders fear that an attempt is being made to place Sweden's economy under Russian influence by means of far-reaching trade agreements. They fear also that Russia will no longer need Swedish supplies when her industry has been re-established, and that the markets of Britain and the U.S.A. will be lost in the meantime. Russia has offered to buy the entire production of the Kiruna iron mines which was formerly exported to Germany.
5. Stockholm is convinced, however, that Russia will not attempt to impede Swedish navigation in the Baltic. In this regard, it is reassuring to note that Russia has evacuated Bornholm and has not demanded the surrender of the Åland Islands.

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